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SUBJECT: (S) SHAHBAZ SHARIF OPEN TO NEGOTIATIONS WITH PRESIDENT ZARDARI
Derived from: DSCG 05-1, D

1. (S) Summary: In a March 6 meeting with Principal Officer, Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) President Shahbaz Sharif laid out a number of talking points for the meeting. Shahbaz Sharif stated that he was only interested in dialogue if it led to concrete commitments from Zardari that would finally resolve the outstanding issues between the PML-N and President Zardari.
2. (S) Principal Officer met March 6 with PML-N President Shahbaz Sharif to deliver talking points provided by Ambassador Holbrooke. Shahbaz Sharif stated that he was only interested in dialogue if it led to concrete commitments from Zardari that would finally resolve the outstanding issues between the PML-N and President Zardari.
3. (S) Shahbaz stated that for any reconciliation between the PML-N and President Zardari to proceed, the President would at a minimum have to address the Iftikhar Chaudhry issue. Shahbaz suggested two possible compromises (although he noted that his brother might have separate complaints). On the Iftikhar Chaudhry issue, Shahbaz suggested two possible compromises (although he noted that his brother might have separate complaints). Iftikhar Chaudhry's restoration as Chief Justice would then have little measurable impact, as the Constitutional Court, staffed by appointees of the President, would have to approve any such restoration.
4. (S) Shahbaz agreed with USG concerns that the current political impasse was distracting attention from issues of national importance. He stated that the PML-N was committed to civilian rule and democracy.
5. (S) Shahbaz expressed great faith in Chief of Army Staff Kayani's commitment to civilian rule and democracy. He stated without prompting that the PML-N was committed to civilian rule and democracy.
6. (S) Shahbaz remained optimistic that if a provincial election for Chief Minister were declared, the PML-N could muster the necessary vote to win the election.
7. (S) Comment: Shahbaz Sharif seemed slightly more open than during his meeting a week earlier to reconciliation with President Zardari. Shahbaz remained pessimistic about President Zardari's desire to pursue reconciliation. End Comment

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